



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/701,234	11/04/2003	Donald E. Weder	8404.016	5276
30589	7590	04/23/2004		EXAMINER
DUNLAP, CODDING & ROGERS P.C. PO BOX 16370 OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73113			KOCH, GEORGE R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1734	

DATE MAILED: 04/23/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/701,234	WEDER ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	George R. Koch III	1734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-10 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 11/4/2003.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: The reference to the prior application should be amended to include the US Patent number. Appropriate correction is required.

Double Patenting

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 1-10 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-10 of U.S. Patent No. 6,666,937. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the limitations of the instant independent claims are broader versions of the claims patented in US 6,666,937.

Claim 1 of the instant application roughly corresponds to claim 1 of US 6,666,937 as steps a, b, c and d of the instant applicant correspond to steps a, b, d and i of claims

1 of US Patent 6,666,937. Claim 2 corresponds to steps f, g and h of claim 1 of US Patent 6,666,937. Claims 3 and 4 correspond to claims 2 and 3 of US Patent 6,666,937. Apparatus claim 5 of the instant invention corresponds to claim 4 of US Patent 6,666,937. Claims 6-10 correspond to claims 4-9 of US Patent 6,666,937.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

7. Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kiener (DE 199 27 139 A1) in view of Heinrichs (US Patent 3,759,303).

Kiener discloses for labeling and stacking a plurality of flower pot, which meet the definition of a flower pot cover (as in claim 1 - an item having an outer surface, open upper end, and retaining space openly communicating with the open upper end), each of the flower pot covers having an outer surface, an open upper end, and a retaining space opening communicating with the open upper end, the method comprising the steps of; (a) providing a first conveyor (item 60), (b) positioning flower pot covers on respective support assemblies (item 62) whereby the flower pot covers are moved through a first travel path (see Figures 1 and 2), (c) automatically applying a label to each flower pot cover (via label applicator 100, see translation, page 4), and (d) automatically stacking the labeled flower pot covers (see final paragraph, page 4).

Kiener does not discloses that the first conveyor has a plurality of spatially disposed support assemblies connected thereto, each of the support assemblies selectively movable between a retracted position and an extended position, a portion of each of the support assemblies configured to substantially correspond to the configuration of the retaining space of the flower pot cover.

Heinrichs discloses a processing system for substrates shaped like a flower pot cover (a cup) wherein the first conveyor has a plurality of spatially disposed support

assemblies (item 6) connected thereto, each of the support assemblies selectively movable between a retracted position and an extended position (see Figure 2), a portion of each of the support assemblies configured to substantially correspond to the configuration of the retaining space of the flower pot cover. Heinrich discloses (see column 4) that this system, wherein the support system, i.e., mandrels, are slightly smaller than the retaining space, permits the cup to fit loosely thereon and prevents binding of the cups to the support assemblies which can "jam" the manufacturing operation (which is a possibility inherent to the conveyor system of Kiener). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have utilized the conveyor and conveying steps of Heinrichs for the step of Kiener in order to prevent binding of the cup to the support assembly.

As to claim 2, Kiener discloses that step (d) is further defined as automatically stacking the labeled flower pot covers into an object receiving space defined by a chute to form a nested stack of flower pot covers (see Figures)

As to claim 3, Kiener further discloses step (e), removing the nested stack of flower pot covers from the object receiving space of the chute.

As to claim 4, Heinrich as incorporated discloses that in step (d), the support assemblies are moved between a retracted position and an extended position to position the flower pot covers supported by the respective support assemblies into the stack of flower pot covers.

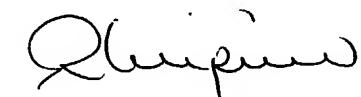
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to George R. Koch III whose telephone number is (571) 272-1230 (TDD only). If the applicant cannot make a direct TDD-to-TDD call, the applicant can communicate by calling the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339 and giving the operator the above TDD number. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 10-7.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Crispino can be reached on (571) 272-1226. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



George R. Koch III
April 17, 2004



RICHARD CRISPINO
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1700